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HUNTLEY, EMILY BALCHIN. Exhibited at Weatherspoon Gallery, May 1 - 20, 1967. Figures and portraits in Various Media. 16 items including 6 oil paintings, pencil drawings, charcoal, casein, oil portraits and figures, clay figures, and a mobile collage. Directed by Mr. Walter Barker. pp. 8

In this group of works--gallery of specific characters--I have tried through varied media to find a way of depicting graphically aspects of the human condition at various levels and in different kinds of people.

PORTRAITS AND FIGURES IN VARIOUS MEDIA

by

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Approved by

Walter Barker
Director

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the
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APRIL 25, 1967
Date of Examination

THESIS—FIGURES—PORTRAITS

Each one- my statement about each individual

The (sitter-subject) people and the paint meet and through the painter, his affinity to paint, and to people, the result becomes a portrayal of that person and as very deep a look into and recounting of that person as the painter has the ability to fathom. How deeply into a person can a painting reach? The interest, depth of understanding, and study—also the painter's affinity to paint—determine this and the success of the resulting work. However, such a painting may also require some work; i. e. looking and studying on the part of the observer to be fully seen and appreciated, in other words, to exist.

Fascination with these two elements is my *raison d'être* a painter. I come upon subjects I want very much to make into a portrait study, or I have a dear friend or loved one I want to paint. After painting many models in classes who were put up there to paint or else, I find in looking back that the more successful work comes from the subjects I chose to study. One interesting aspect to me is the fact that in doing a painting of someone I was attracted to paint but did not really know before—we invariably end up as being very close, with an understanding of each other that transcends other more ordinary relationships. This seems to make us see each other deeper than most people do. In thinking this over to find out why this happens, I have decided it is because I am studying the person so hard and looking

and feeling, that they respond to doing this by relaxing. One of their reactions in sitting still seems to be that models usually get quite contemplative and retrospective and therefore they begin thinking or remembering out loud about all sorts of things. It is almost as if they were "on the couch," thereby I hear things from their past, reactions and experiences that soak into my consciousness from their ramblings that otherwise might never have come to the surface in an ordinary relationship or conversation. During the painting of my mother-in-law, for instance, I heard things about her past and the family that her own son, my husband, had never had an inkling. In doing this I find and feel they are helping me, albeit unwittingly, to paint them the way I want to—from the inside out. The nicest thing anyone can say about one of my portraits is, "You know, I feel that I know that person."

What about a person comes through in the kind of portrait I am discussing? To quote Abraham Lincoln I think will explain what I mean:
 1.
 "After forty, every man is responsible for his face." Another quote,
 2.
 "...the windows on the soul" (referring to an individual's eyes) also may help me explain. The life of the individual is and should be seen in its effect on the face, eyes, mouth, skin, hair, etc. Reactions to events, events themselves, all contribute to the road map of one's life—if you will but look. Carriage, natural sitting or standing positions,

1. Adlai Stevenson, Saturday Review, August 1964.

2. Gullaume de Sulluste, 1500.

the way the head is held on the neck, the set of the lips in repose, all these factors if noted and recounted, interpreted—if you will—by the painter, can be telling details that give the picture, tell the story, the artist needs to find if he is doing this type of portrait of his subject.

Now, not everyone wants to have this type of portrait done or even considered, and not every painter is interested in doing this sort of a portrait. Many people, most people, want a portrait that takes away their wrinkles, frowns, grey hair, etc., taking away with these things the life they have lived, and substituting in its place a made-over "corpse"—as "natural as if he were alive." This is fine for those who want this and for those painters who copy and improvise exterior visages to flatter and please and bring the Fountain of Youth to their subject—but not for me.

For me, the part of doing these paintings that intrigues me most is the PEOPLE part—the painting part is my second fascination, and I could not possibly be satisfied with anything else but my most sincere effort to portray a life on the canvas to the best of my ability. Granted, that each of these works may not be the success I wanted, but the effort has been my best and the result my most sincere efforts. Yet so many mysteries remain within and concerning the human being—his mind, his heart, his soul, his thoughts, —his very Life—that no wonder my unflagging interest increases with each year; and no wonder success can only be fleeting, glimpsed for a moment, and if not captured—gone—until the next moment of feeling and doing arrives.

CATALOGUE

1. Mary Julian
2. Spencer Murphy
3. Self-Portrait
4. Clay Figure I
5. Clay Figure II
6. Drawing V
7. Drawing I
8. Drawing II
9. Drawing III
10. Drawing IV
11. Louise
12. Betty
13. Richard
14. Elie
15. Betty II
16. Collage

Comments on Individual Work

1. Mary Julian- Human dignity—not pride—a simplicity of great strength were the characteristics in this woman that attracted me to doing her portrait. Oil, canvas.
2. Spencer Murphy- This man and the previous subject had been life long friends, and after seeing my portrait of her, Spencer asked me to do his. A great sympathy with and for other human beings was the main characteristic of this man—plus a delightful sense of humor and fun mixed with a rich intelligence. Oil, Canvas.
3. Self-Portrait- A try at expressing in paint how I feel inside in my reaction to the world—not how I think I look, but my good feelings and bad about my world. Oil, canvas.
4. Clay Figure I- As a painter, clay is a more or less unfamiliar medium, and yet it seems to be a medium to aid the study and the thinking in three dimensions that a painter must do even if his surface is two dimensional. The dabs of clay as applied to build the figure are in a way quite similiar to the application of paint to the canvas or other flat surface.
5. Clay Figure II- The grace and youth of this sitter comes through even in this little figure—showing scale as a very important and intriguing factor that deserves much

consideration. In this group of my thesis show works, scale is a varying yet ever present factor which I have dealt with in several ways.

6. Drawing V- This is a more conventional figure drawing as related to the future idea of sculpting it rather than painting it. Pencil.
7. Drawing I-IV (7,8,9,10) In looking at this model I found parts of his anatomy seeming to look back at me and becoming intrigued with the idea, so I did a series of drawings of faces found in the juxtaposition of various parts of his body—not ordinarily considered as facial. Pencil.
11. Louise- A tiny person of sprightly, almost bird-like appearance and action whom I knew as a sensitive person and serious painter. She became, when painted, a new and surprisingly monumental yet still tiny figure of sweetness and sensitivity. Oil, casein, charcoal, canvas.
12. Betty I- The possessor of a handsome head and gracefully carried body, Betty became in my mind a prime subject for a portrait. Her intelligence and wit became obvious during the hours we spent working together. Oil, charcoal, canvas.
13. Richard- At this point I changed my working surface and medium to accomodate the idea of doing full-size portraits of heroic proportions. This man had a look of unity and yet simplicity that intrigued me; as the work

progressed the personality of the "stander" became apparent as being consistent with the unity and grace and enjoyment of life that first attracted me to this unique individual. Charcoal, casein, masonite.

14. Elie- A delightful newcomer to this country, our language and ways; this man's capacity for pantomime, mime, and acclimation to his surroundings fascinated and impelled me to "do" the marvelous cranium that held all this plus the personality that spilled over with gaiety and joie de vivre. Again I made the portrait on the large panel of masonite with charcoal as the sole medium. They both combined well for me in evoking this warm, strong character. A simple interpretation I have discovered can be very telling and full of appropriateness to the subject. Charcoal, masonite panel.
15. Betty II- Wishing to extend my so far successful experiments with the masonite panel and charcoal, I attempted another portrait of Betty. In this over size figure I believe I have found a new and fascinating portrait technique that I will pursue to some length in the near future. Charcoal, masonite panel.
16. Collage-Mobile- Amidst the much complained about and berrated mechanization and computerization of our age and world, I seem to see a myriad of almost human faces lurking everywhere, as if someone is sub-consciously trying to humanize the very things that are tending to dehumanize

us. Do you see them too? Paper, paint, plywood, glass.